United Nations

Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

+ Security Council, in resolution adopted on Friday, asks Secretary-General to appoint civilian official to help restore public services in Sarajevo; calls for complete freedom of movement in city.

+ Security Council extends UNOMIG mandate to 31 March; asks Secretary-General to report on Georgian-Abkhaz peace talks, with view to possible peace-keeping deployment.

+ Secretary-General, meeting with Haitian President, reiterates support for Governor's Island Agreement; initiative by Haitian Parliamentarians seen as way to break deadlock, not as substitute for Agreement.

+ Four United Nations staff members released in good health after being detained in Sudan; unknown gunmen hold UNICEF staff member in Afghanistan.

+ UNOSOM II Cholera Management Committee reports hundreds of cases and eighty deaths as disease spreads in Somalia.

+ Commission on Human Rights, meeting in Geneva, adopts resolutions dealing with freedom of expression, torture, and protection of minorities; appoints Special Rapporteur on detention and imprisonment.

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The Security Council has asked the Secretary-General to appoint a senior civilian official to assist in restoring essential public services in Sarajevo, and to report within 10 days on procedures to extend the protection given that city to the towns of Maglaj, Mostar and Vitez. The Council took that action, under Chapter VII of the United Nations Charter, by unanimously adopting resolution 900 (1994) on Friday evening. The official will act under the Secretary-General's Special Representative in conjunction with the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina and in consultation with local authorities. His mandate excludes the city of Pale.

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The resolution called on all parties, with the assistance of the United Nations, to achieve complete freedom of movement for the civilian population and humanitarian goods to, from and within Sarajevo, and to help restore normal life there. It called on States and donors to assist the Secretary-General by contributing personnel and equipment in the implementation of relevant resolutions. The Council also called on all parties to cooperate with the United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) in consolidation of the cease-fire in and around Sarajevo.

A number of Council members expressed disappointment that the resolution had been weakened in order to ensure support. The Bosnian representative said partial implementation of the resolution in question and of other resolutions would make the Council an unwitting party to the siege of Sarajevo. He also said that while his country welcomed the assistance of all Governments, it would not be bound by agreements between the aggressor forces and members of the Council unless they were consistent with Bosnia's territorial integrity.

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In a second meeting on Friday evening, the Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in Georgia (UNOMIG) until 31 March. By unanimously adopting resolution 901 (1994), the Council asked the Secretary-General to report to it on progress made in the negotiations between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides and on the situation on the ground. The report -- due by 21 March -- is to pay special attention to circumstances which might warrant the deployment of a peace-keeping force.

In a previous resolution, the Council had extended UNOMIG's mandate until 7 March and had asked the Secretary-General to report to it immediately after the third round of negotiations between the two parties. Noting that negotiations between the Georgian and Abkhaz sides were due to resume in New York today, the Council urged the two parties to achieve a political settlement, based on the principles set out in previous resolutions. The Council said such progess would allow it to consider the establishment of a peace-keeping force in Abkhazia.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali had a meeting on Saturday with Haitian President Jean-Bertrand Aristide, during which he reiterated the support of the United Nations for the implementation of the Governor's Island Agreement, according to a spokesman for the Organization.

The Secretary-General had previously been informed by a representative group of Haitian Parliamentarians of an initiative to unblock the Haitian crisis within the framework of the Agreement. He had brought that initiative to the attention of the Security Council as a way of breaking the deadlock and promoting implementation of the Governor's Island Agreement -- not as a substitute for it. The initiative had since been endorsed by the Haitian

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Chamber of Deputies. During Saturday's meeting, President Aristide expressed the view that the Parliamentarians' initiative did not conform with the Governor's Island Agreement, and that it was counter-productive.

The United Nations spokesman said the Secretary-General and the President would continue to explore ways to resolve the Haitian crisis.

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Four Sudanese United Nations staff members recently detained by the Sudanese People's Liberation Army have been released and are in good health, a United Nations spokesman announced today. The four, part of a United Nations Operation Lifeline Sudan team, had been detained late last month while vaccinating children and carrying out an assessment of humanitarian needs in the Attar area.

However, the spokesman went on to say that the Officer-in-Charge of the United Nations Office in Kabul, Afghanistan -- a staff member of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and an Afghan national -- had been detained by unknown gunmen. He deplored the incident and called for the staff member's immediate release.

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The Cholera Managment Committee established by the United Nations Operation in Somalia (UNOSOM II) to monitor the situation in the country today released statistics on the disease. In Bassano, there have been 585 cases and 17 deaths; in Belet Wayne, 222 cases and 40 deaths; in Bula Burti, 57 cases and 11 deaths; and in Mogadishu, 103 cases and 12 deaths.

A United Nations spokesman said two cholera experts from the World Health Organization (WHO) had arrived in Mogadishu to strengthen the WHO presence in Somalia. Other efforts to combat the disease, including the chlorination of water tanks and wells, were moving ahead. A public information programme had also been launched to increase awareness of the disease.

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At a meeting in Geneva on Friday, the Commission on Human Rights adopted a series of resolutions on such issues as freedom of opinion and expression, torture and degrading treatment, the protection of minorities, and respect for the human rights of United Nations personnel.

In a resolution dealing with contemporary forms of slavery, the Commission invited Member States to consider protecting particularly vulnerable groups, such as children and migrant women, against exploitation in prostitution and other practices. Another resolution urged Governments to establish national committees and other mechanisms to ensure that the aims of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People were planned and implemented in full partnership with indigenous people.

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The Commission expressed concern at the extensive use of threats and acts of violence and harassment against persons who exercise the right to freedom of opinion and expression. It also adopted a resolution appointing a Special Rapporteur on detention and imprisonment, with a three-year term. All the resolutions were adopted without a vote.

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